

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 IO-14 ISO-00

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R 100906Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4906

INFO AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

AMCONSUL SONGKHLA

DIA

CINCPAC

USIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 11157

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINS, ELAB, PINR, TH

SUBJECT: STUDENTS AND SPECIAL INTEREST POLITICS

REF: BANGKOK A-182

INTRODUCTION

WITH THE RESIGNATION OF THE MODERATE LEADERSHIP IN THE NATIONAL STUDENT CENTER OF THAILAND (NSCT), THE ACTIVIST STUDENTS ARE TRYING THEIR HAND AT RUNNING THE STUDENT MOVEMENT. THIS SPLIT, HOWEVER, MEANS THAT THE UNITY OF THE STUDENT MOVEMENT IS AT ITS LOWEST POINT IN MONTHS. THE ACTIVISTS ARE FINDING THAT PRESSURING THE MODERATES WAS EASIER THAN TAKING THE LEAD AND RUNNING THE RISKS OF FAILURE, SUCH AS THE ABORTIVE PLAN FOR A DEMONSTRATION AT THE

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EMBASSY ON JULY 4 WHICH WOULD HAVE PROTESTED AMERICAN

MILITARY PRESENCE IN THAILAND. DESPITE THE DEFINITE LIMITS ON THE ACTIVIST STUDENTS, THEY WILL BE MORE INCLINED TO DEMONSTRATIONS THAN THE PREVIOUS EXISTING PATTERNS OF PROTESTS BY COMMUNIQUE AND SEMINAR. END INTRODUCTION.

1. THE AIRGRAM (REFERENCE), OF WHICH THIS TELEGRAM IS A SUMMARY, DESCRIBES THE STUDENT MOVEMENT'S ROLE IN BRINGING VARIOUS ISSUES TO PUBLIC ATTENTION AND AS A PRESSURE GROUP IN AN EMERGING PROCESS WHERE SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS TEND TO MUTUALLY SUPPORT EACH OTHER. THUS WE HAVE SEEN THE NSCT CAST AS THE CHAMPION OF THE FARMERS AND THE ACTIVIST GROUPS SUPPORT URBAN LABOR. ALSO ILLUSTRATED IS HOW ACTIVIST STUDENTS HAVE PRESSURED RELUCTANT MODERATE STUDENT LEADERS TO INVOLVE THEMSELVES IN VARIOUS DISPUTES. THE AIRGRAM REPEATEDLY DEMONSTRATES THAT NOT EVERY COMMUNIQUE ISSUED IN THE NAME OF THE NATIONAL STUDENT CENTER OF THAILAND ACTUALLY CARRIES THE APPROVAL OF THAT ORGANIZATION AND THAT THE ACTIVISTS HAVE RESORTED TO OTHER RUSES TO GIVE THE APPEARANCE OF STUDENT UNITY WHEN IT DOES NOT EXIST.

2. DURING THE RECENT ANNUAL SCHOOL HOLIDAY FROM MID-MARCH TO JUNE, THE NATIONAL STUDENT CENTER OF THAILAND (NSCT) CLOSELY IDENTIFIED ITSELF WITH THE INTERESTS OF LANDLESS FARMERS. THE NSCT DEMOCRACY TEACHING PROGRAM PARTICULARLY HEIGHTENED NSCT AWARENESS OF THE FARMERS' PROBLEMS, AND IN EARLY JUNE THE NSCT WENT SO FAR AS TO ENCOURAGE TENANT FARMERS TO COME TO BANGKOK AND SEEK REDRESS FOR THEIR GRIEVANCES.

3. THE PEOPLE FOR DEMOCRACY (PFD), A NON-STUDENT ORGANIZATION, AND A FEW UNIVERSITY STUDENT ACTIVISTS HAVE IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES WITH THE PLIGHT OF THE URBAN LABOR. PFD WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN ORGANIZING THE APPEARANCE OF STUDENT SUPPORT FOR THE RECENT TEXTILE WORKERS STRIKE, WHEN IN FACT SUCH SUPPORT DID NOT EXIST. DURING THE SUMMER HOLIDAY THE PFD ALSO PUT CONSIDERABLE EFFORT INTO INFLUENCING NSCT DECISIONS, AND SUPPORTING MORE ACTIVIST NSCT MEMBERS. THESE ACTIVITIES WERE ALSO IN PART TO INFLUENCE THE NSCT EXECUTIVE LEVEL ELECTIONS COMING IN

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MID-JULY.

4. THE AIRGRAM ALSO DISCUSSES OTHER STUDENT GROUPS AND THEIR ACTIVITIES OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS.

5. WHILE THE STUDENT MOVEMENT MAINLY CONFINED ITSELF TO PROTEST BY SEMINAR AND COMMUNIQUE DURING THE SCHOOL HOLIDAY, WE CAN EXPECT RENEWED CAMPUS ACTIVISM NOW THAT

THE NEW SCHOOL TERM HAS BEGUN. WITH THE RESIGNATION OF THE MODERATE NSCT LEADERS, THE ACTIVISTS HAVE TRIED TO TAKE A STRONGER HAND IN THAT PARAMOUNT ORGANIZATION AND THE STUDENT MOVEMENT AS A WHOLE. THEIR FIRST MOVE WAS AN ABORTIVE ATTEMPT TO STAGE DEMONSTRATIONS AT THE EMBASSY AGAINST THE AMERICAN MILITARY PRESENCE (BANGKOK 10717 AND 10923). A BASIC PROBLEM FOR ACTIVIST LEADERS IS THAT BY GETTING TOO FAR AHEAD OF THEIR MODERATE CONSTITUENCY, THEY SACRIFICE SOME OF THEIR SUPPORT AND CONSEQUENTLY, INFLUENCE. NEVERTHELESS, THE ACTIVIST STUDENTS WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO DEVELOP ISSUES CRITICAL OF THE UNITED STATES.  
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## Message Attributes

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